

Facts about Women and Heart Disease

The Basics

- According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular diseases are responsible for 40% of American deaths each year. This makes it the number one cause of death in the United States.
- There are currently 8,000,000 women in the United States with heart disease (WomenHeart).
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death of women in the United States. It claims the lives of nearly 500,000 women each year (WomenHeart).
- A woman is six times more likely to die from heart disease than breast cancer (Women's Heart Foundation).
- In a national study, Indiana has the 17th highest mortality rate for women with heart disease amongst all the states and District of Columbia. Between 1991 and 1995, heart disease claimed the lives of 43,542 Hoosier women (Center for Disease Control).

Risk Factors

- Smoking cigarettes is the number one controllable risk factor in developing heart disease. Yet 27% of American women smoke and that number continues to grow (Women's Heart Foundation).
- Smoking cigarettes can increase a woman's chance of having a heart attack up to 19 years earlier than non-smokers (WomenHeart).
- Diabetic women are two to three times more likely to have a heart attack than women without diabetes (WomenHeart).
- Other risk factors include having a family history of cardiovascular disease and dyslipidemia (high total cholesterol or low HDL, or "good" cholesterol) (Women's Heart Foundation).

Men vs. Women

- A woman is twice as likely as a man to die after having heart bypass surgery (WomenHeart).
- Women's symptoms of heart disease are typically more mild than men's. Many women have atypical symptoms and may suffer no chest pain at all (Women's Heart Foundation).
- Although more women than men die of heart disease each year, women are less likely to receive treatment for it. Only 33% of angioplasties, stents, and bypass surgeries, 28% of implantable defibrillators, and 36% of open-heart surgeries are received by women each year (WomenHeart).